

May 2023

### Early Literacy and Children's Services Chat

1. **Introductions** – people were able to introduce themselves if they felt comfortable
2. **Future Meeting Schedule** – Wednesdays and Fridays were proposed. Some group members have programming on Wednesdays and Thursdays. It was decided that the State Library would send out a [Doodle poll](#) to get more accurate responses and possibly reach more people. Two participants (one in person and one via email) stated that monthly meetings would be the preference.
3. **Early Literacy Projects** – There was a discussion on ways to foster parent engagement. One library shared that they reach parents through Master Gardener programming. The similarities/intersections between gardening and early literacy were noted. Others talked about promoting their early literacy efforts via outreach to hospitals and possibly offering a book and library card to new parents. Some communities do not have hospitals, and families travel outside of the community to have their babies. The group wonders if there are any outreach ideas for those new families. It was also noted that parent networks often need to be re-established after the pandemic. The AKAEYC newsletter serves as a vehicle to communicate and promote Imagination Library, among other things. Are there any other community-wide promotional newsletters that your library might reach out to for a library spotlight? Lapsit, Read with Me, and story packets were identified as early literacy tools as well.

Summer reading was discussed. Summer Reading kick-offs are happening, and one library incorporated a tea party. The use of themes was mentioned to engage children and families during the summer months. It was also stated that libraries could tap into activities happening in their communities. Outreach to community agencies could create more conduits for interfacing with stakeholders. Providing websites to families was also identified as a solid resource.

Kits were highlighted. It was mentioned that early literacy kits could be obtained through ILL as another alternative to promote early literacy. See more information about future kit ideas in the next section.

Other promotion ideas included joining a Facebook mom's group and local public radio to keep families informed about library programming.

4. **How can the state library support early literacy efforts?**
  - a. Funding for both patron early literacy kits and storytime kits for library staff
    - i. Patron kits could contain books, puppets, laminated sheets with activity ideas as well as parent early literacy tips, etc.

- ii. Library staff kits could contain storytime ideas and storytime items like scarves, shakers, music, etc.
  - b. Beanstack training
  - c. Grants for storytime storage
  - d. General training for grants, storytime, and storage for storytime materials
  - e. Saroj Ghoting trainings were highlighted and the books, *Step into Storytime* and *Supercharged Storytime*. The *Supercharged Storytime* training is available via [Webjunction](#). Please check out the [State Library webpage](#) and the [storytime tab](#).
5. **Peer Support** - The need for crowd control was discussed. One solution presented was initiating physical movement activities as a good way to refocus attention. This includes also having a wide range of books for various audiences and age groups to adapt to various needs/ages of the crowd. Music and movement programs were encouraged. These are programs solely focused on moving to allow children to get their wiggles out. Repetition with songs and books helps children become familiar with the material, fostering a love of reading and a love of music. Children try to master the lyrics of familiar songs giving them confidence. Someone suggested a hello and goodbye song that is the same each week while changing songs that are in between readings to refresh things.

An Alaskan library will be hosting its first Drag Story Hour at the library and seeks feedback on how to implement the program successfully.